

The Scarce Tissue *Rheumaptera cervinalis* (Scop). (Lep.: Geometridae) in Hertfordshire

Single specimens were taken on the nights of 15/16 and 16/17 April 2004, in Geescroft Wilderness, one of the long-running woodland light-traps on Rothamsted Farm (trap No. 22, O.S. grid reference TL 132128).

This species last occurred in this trap in 2000; and indeed, has significantly declined at this site since a peak in 1979, with several gaps of years with no records. The last Hertfordshire record was in 2003, with the previous being 2001 (Colin Plant, personal communication).

As a relatively uncommon visitor to light, this species can often be over-looked, so may be more common than is realised. The fact that it has taken to feeding on cultivated species of *Berberis* means that its range is not affected by the occurrence of its natural foodplant, Barberry (*Berberis vulgaris*).— PHILIP J L GOULD, Co-ordinator, Light-trap Network, Rothamsted Insect Survey, Plant & Invertebrate Ecology Division, Rothamsted Research, Harpenden, Hertfordshire, AL5 2JQ (E-mail: phil.gould@bbsrc.ac.uk).

The Poplar Hawk moth *Laothoe populi* (L.) (Lep. Sphingidae): pink forms in north-west Kent

On 4 July 4 2000, my garden mv light attracted a female of this moth with wings, head, thorax and body a distinct pink in colour, the median band of the forewing being of a more intense shade. *Laothoe populi* is a common species still in north-west Kent and my garden light has attracted over two thousand, almost all males, over thirty-five years. Until the year 2000, I had not encountered any examples of this species that were exceptional in appearance, here or elsewhere.

This experience seems to be in contrast with historical evidence for this area. Tutt (1902. *A Natural History of the British Lepidoptera* III: 467), referring to the late 19th century, writes that L. W. Newman had bred at pink example from Bexley, on 5 July 1897, after the pupa had been subjected to heat treatment. He added that Newman bred regularly pink specimens from batches reared from Bexley larvae. Tutt also quotes that W. West of Greenwich had noticed that males in the Lewisham and Greenwich area of south-east London (about five miles to the west of Bexley) regularly possessed a rosy tint. Some sixty years later, Chalmers-Hunt (1962. *The Butterflies and Moths of Kent*. in Suppl. *Ent. Rec.* 74) noted that D. F. Owen had stated that at Lewisham “decidedly pink females are not uncommon”. Plant (1993. *Larger Moths of the London Area*, 111) makes no mention of pinkish forms being present in north-west Kent or the London area in general.

My experience of *L. populi* extends back to the mid-1920s for north-west Kent from Bexley to Gravesend, and widely in Kent, and elsewhere, in the post-war period. Apart from the one observed in 2000, I have not seen a specimen of *L. populi*